

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

Please insert the following subtitle after the word "Claims" on page 14:

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS: - -.

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (Cancelled) – 20. (Cancelled).
21. (New) A method of protecting objects against theft, said method comprising the steps of:
 - looping at least one strapping means around an object to be secured;
 - overlapping portions of said at least one strapping means and joining together said overlapping portions; and
 - feeding at least one electronically detectable security element to said strapping means in such manner that said security element is enclosed between said overlapping portions.
22. (New) The method according to claim 21 wherein said step of feeding said security element to said strapping means occurs prior to said overlapping step and applying said security element to one of said portions to be overlapped.
23. (New) The method according to claim 21 wherein said step of feeding said security element to said strapping means occurs during said overlapping step and positioning said security element intermediate of said overlapping portions.
24. (New) The method of Claim 23 wherein said strapping means of at least one loop comprises a weldable, band-shaped strapping material such that said overlapping portions form a welding zone and wherein said security element is coated at least in part with a meltable material, said method further comprising the steps of:

introducing said security element coated at least in part with a meltable material between said overlapping portions of said band-shaped strapping material in said welding zone; and

welding said strapping material and said coated security element to one another in said welding zone, thereby sealing said loop.

25. (New) The method according to claim 24 wherein said welding step comprises employing a friction welding or ultrasonic welding process.

26. (New) The method according to claim 21 wherein said step of looping said at least one strapping means around an object comprises feeding said strapping means by means of a conveying device to a band guide which surrounds the object at least in part and routing it through said guide, and drawing said strapping means off a supply reel and severing said loop from the remaining supply of strapping material prior to or subsequent to said joining step.

27. (New) The method according to claim 21 further comprising the steps of peeling said security elements from a supply reel onto which they are wound in the form of a continuous strip and feeding them to said strapping means and severing a single security element from said continuous strip prior to or subsequent to its integration in said strapping means.

28. (New) The method according to claim 21 further comprising the steps of presenting said security elements as cut-to-size strip elements and feeding them to said strapping means one at a time.

29. (New) The method according to claim 21 wherein said looping step comprises looping the object to be secured with two strapping means and affixing at least two security elements to the object at an angle of 90 degrees relative to each other.

30. (New) A device for the protection of an object against theft, said device comprising: a strap that encircles the object to be secured, said strap comprising at least one electronically detectable security element that is enclosed between overlapping portions of said strap and wherein said overlapping portions are secured together.

31. (New) An apparatus for applying a device to an object for the protection of the object against theft, said apparatus comprising:

an applicator that encircles the object with at least one strap and which applies at least one electronically detectable security element to the device;

a sealing device for sealing overlapping portions of said strap to secure said strap around the object; and

wherein said security element is enclosed between said overlapping portions of said strap when said overlapping portions are sealed.

32. (New) The apparatus according to claim 31 wherein said applicator includes a positioning device for positioning said security element intermediate of said overlapping portions.

33. (New) The apparatus according to claim 31 wherein said strap comprises a weldable, band-shaped strapping material and wherein said applicator further comprises a conveying device that feeds said strapping material to a band guide so as to surround the object at least in part.

34. (New) The apparatus according to claim 31 wherein said apparatus arranges said security elements singly in a magazine or wound on a supply reel as a continuous strip and which cuts said security elements to size.

35. (New) The apparatus according to claim 31 further comprising a feed device for picking up said security elements and feeding said security elements to said applicator.

36. (New) The apparatus according to claim 31 further comprising a severing device for cutting said security elements to a size corresponding approximately to the length of the overlapping portions.

37. (New) The apparatus according to claim 36 wherein said severing device is a cutter.

38. (New) The apparatus according to claim 31 wherein said sealing device is a friction welding device or an ultrasonic welding device and wherein said security element is coated with a meltable material at least in part.

39. (New) The apparatus according to claim 31 wherein said security elements are of a strip-shaped configuration and/or arranged on a carrier web.

40. (New) The apparatus according to claim 31 wherein said applicator comprises at least an idler roll and a dispensing lip.

41. (New) The apparatus according to claim 31 wherein said strap is wound on a supply reel as a band supply and a severing device is provided which severs said strap from said band supply after its overlapping portions have been joined together.

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AMENDMENTS TO THE DRAWINGS

Five (5) sheets of formal drawings are attached to replace the six sheets of informal drawings published in this application.

Attachment: Replacement Sheets 1/5, 2/5, 3/5, 4/5 and 5/5